

Centers of Excellence for Recovery

DMHAS is advancing its approach to recovery-oriented services through nine newly established Centers of Excellence that are a key part of its Recovery Education and Training Institute. The programs selected to be Centers of Excellence in the first six areas of recovery-oriented practice are: Advanced Behavioral Health and Norwalk Hospital for **outreach and engagement**; DMHAS Southwest CT Mental Health Center and the Wheeler Clinic for **person-centered planning**; Gilead Community Service for **core clinical skills/recovery guiding**; Fellowship Place for **supportive community living**; Focus on Recovery United for **peer-run programs**; and Perception Program and the Community Health Services, African Men in Recovery for **culturally-specific programs**. Each Center was provided with consultation and training to develop exemplary programs. They can now serve as models for other care providers who are focusing on offering recovery-oriented services. In designing the consultation and training, those elements of recovery-oriented practice with which staff already have familiarity and those elements where they have the least skill were identified through a recovery practices inventory that was administered to 169 staff across the nine programs.

The survey found that staff appreciate the need for people to define themselves beyond the identity of “mental patient” or “addict” and understand that peers can help in this process. Staff also understand the different roles of the person with the psychiatric condition vs. those of the care provider, but are unsure about what realistic expectations they can have with respect to client choice and participation in their own recovery. Staff have the least knowledge about the nature of the recovery process itself, the role of symptom reduction and management and the ways in which people pursue recovery outside of treatment/rehabilitation settings.

Figure 1: Staff Training Needs Relative to Recovery

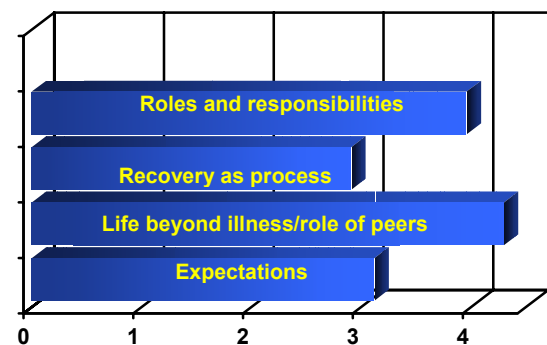


Figure 2: Functioning of persons with psychiatric disabilities improved following recovery training

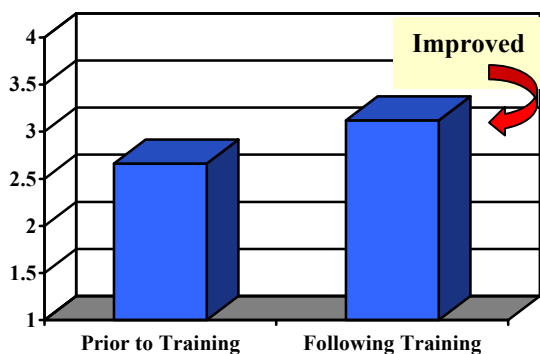
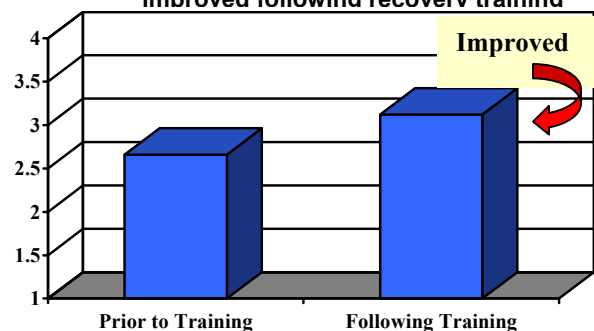


Figure 3: Quality of working relationships between persons with psychiatric disabilities and staff improved following recovery training



Figures 2 and 3 indicate that persons with psychiatric disabilities at the nine Centers of Excellence benefited from the staff consultation and training. A total of 122 persons were interviewed before and after the recovery trainings and consultation. They reported (on a scale of 1 to 5) that, not only did they experience enhanced functioning and decreased symptoms, but they also improved their working relationship with staff over time. While preliminary, these findings are encouraging to people in recovery and care providers alike, offering hope that recovery-oriented care will be both more effective and more enjoyable to provide.

For more information on the Centers of Excellence initiative, contact DMHAS Education and Training at (860) 262-5060.